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# Message Text

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15
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W
---------- 121294
O 111040Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3302
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
USINT CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 1469

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN, BG, EG
SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR INDIA-PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH MEETING IN CAIRO

1. NEAR END OF GENERAL TALK AMBASSADOR ELOIT AND I HAD WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAHI THIS MORNING, I ASKED SHAHI WHEN HE THOUGHT AZIZ AHMED WOULD RETURN FROM CAIRO. IN RETURN HE ASKED WHETHER I HAD BEEN BRIEFED UPON THE PURPOSE OF THE AZIZ AHMED TRIP. WHEN I REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE HE SAID HE WOULD CLUE US IN.

2. SHAHI SAID THAT ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT SECRETARY GENERAL HASSAN EL-TOHAMI HAD HAD A MEETING WITH BHUTTO IN KARACHI ON FEBRUARY 8. THIS WAS AFTER PREVIOUS MEETINGS TOHAMI HAD IN BOTH BANGLADESH AND DELHI. HE SAID THAT MUJIBUR RAHMAN HAD TAKEN THE POSITION THAT BANGLADESH COULD NOT ATTEND THE LAHORE CONFERENCE WITHOUT PRIOR RECOGNITION ON THE PART OF PAKISTAN. HE HAD ALSO GIVEN TOHAMI A POSITION ON THE 195 POW PROBLEM THAT SOUNDED ENCOURAGING. JUST WHAT HIS PRECISE POSITION WAS WAS NOT CLEAR, BUT REFERENCE WAS MADE TO FACT THAT MUJIB HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE 195 SHOULD NOT BE HELD MUCH LONGER.

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3. I AM NOT CLEAR JUST HOW THE FOCUS OF ALL OF THIS WAS

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SUDDENLY CHANGED TO SADAT OF EGYPT. IN ANY EVENT, A

PROPOSAL WAS MADE THAT BHUTTO, INDIRA GANDHI AND MUJIB
MEET UNDER AUSPICES OF SADAT IN CAIRO TO WORK THINGS OUT
PRIOR TO THE LAHORE SUMMIT. INDIRA HAD TAKEN POSITION
SHE COULD NOT PERSONALLY GO, SO PROPOSAL NOW IS THAT
FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE THREE MEET IN CAIRO. BHUTTO
HAS TAKEN POSITION THAT THERE NEED BE NO ACTUAL RELEASE
OF PRISONERS PRIOR TO RECOGNITION, PROVIDED IT IS
ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THEIR RELEASE WOULD FOLLOW AFTER
RECOGNITION. APPARENTLY EVERYTHING HINGES AS OF NOW ON
AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS POINT THAT IS SUFFICIENTLY
CLEAR AND FIRM ON THE PART OF BANGLADESH TO SATISFY SADAT
AS TO ITS SINCERITY. SHAHI POINTED OUT THAT AZIZ AHMED
WAS ALREADY IN CAIRO AND COULD STAY ON FOR THE MEETING
OF THE THREE. REFERENCE WAS ALSO MADE TO THE FACT THAT
THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF BANGLADESH WAS AT THE MOMENT
IN ALGERIA.

4. I TOLD SHAHI THIS WAS VERY IMPORTANT AND ENCOURAGING
INFORMATION AND THAT WE CERTAINLY HOPED THINGS WOULD
WORK OUT. HE SAID HE HAD DEBATED WHETHER TO ASK ME TO
RECOMMEND THAT WE USE OUR INFLUENCE IN BANGLADESH TO URGE
THEM TO TAKE A FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE AS REGARDS THE 195.
HE SAID RATHER SADLY THAT IT SEEMED A SHAME THE INFLUENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES COULD NOT READILY BE BROUGHT TO PLAY
ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT MATTER. HE SAID IF I SO RECOMMENDED
HE WOULD GUESS THAT CABLES WOULD FLY BACK AND FORTH
BETWEEN EMBASSIES AND WASHINGTON AND THAT WE WOULD CONCLUDE
IN THE END NOT TO GET "INVOLVED". I SAID I THOUGH HE TOOK
SOMEWHAT TOO GLOOMY A VIEW ON THIS BUT HOPED THAT WITH
THE SPEED IN WHICH THINGS SEEM TO BE HAPPENING ALL WOULD BE
SETTLED IN ANY EVENT PRIOR TO ANY ACTION WE MIGHT TAKE.

5. IT SEEMS TO US HERE THAT BHUTTO HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT
FORWARD STEP IN HIS POSITION AND THAT THINGS ARE GETTING
CLOSE ENOUGH TO BEING WORKED OUT SO THAT WE SHOULD NOT
HESITATE TO USE SUCH INFLUENCE AS WE MAY HAVE IN BANGLADESH
TO SEE A QUICK SOLUTION COME TO A NAGGING PROBLEM. WE
NEED NOT OF COUSE, GET INTO DETAILS, BUT HOPE
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DEPARTMENT WILL SEE FIT TO ASK EMBASSY DACCA TO DO
WHAT IT CAN IN URGING MUJIB TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AS
POSSIBLE IN SPECIFIC ASSURANCES RE RELEASE OF THE 195.
CONSTABLE, WHO IS ALSO HERE, HAS SEEN THIS MESSAGE
AND CONCURS.BYROADE



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